

# The Historical Depth of the Tiberian Reading Tradition of Biblical Hebrew

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Cover image: T-S AS 8.129. A leaf from a Cairo Geniza biblical codex containing Gen. 30.17–20 and showcasing Moshe Mohe's non-standard Tiberian pointing of the standard Tiberian pronunciation of *Issachar* (see within, ch. 4), courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

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## 18. I-Y WE-YIQTOL FOR WEQATAL

By and large in Tiberian BH prose, there is a clearcut functional difference between *we-yiqtol* and *weqatal* forms. Whereas the former are used fairly exclusively in 1st- and 3rd-person for what Bybee et al. (1994, 179) call ‘speaker-oriented modality’, i.e., directives indicating the speaker’s will,<sup>1</sup> the latter have much broader future force, including indicative meaning and both ‘speaker-oriented’ and ‘agent-oriented modality’ (see Bybee et al. 1994, 176–81; Shulman 1996, 180; Verstraete 2007, 32–35; Cook 2012, 247–48; Dallaire 2014, 39; Hornkohl 2018, 31–32; 2021, 378–80, 383–86).

In a well-known functional subcategory of the modality signalled by *we-yiqtol*, the structure serves to encode final, e.g., purpose and result, clauses. Though real-world purposes and results (and speaker-oriented modality, more generally) can also be communicated via *weqatal*, the latter much less transparently expresses these meanings. In sum, then, in BH prose *we-yiqtol* normally has jussive semantics, whether subordinated to a previous (normally directive volitional) verb (1) or merely coordinate with a previous jussive (2).

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<sup>1</sup> The parallel 2nd-person form is not *we-tiqtol*, but the imperative *u-qtol* (JM §116f; cf. Lambdin 1973, 119, §107c; Muraoka 1997).

- (1) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ וַיְרִדוּ בְדִגְתַּי הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף  
 הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְבְהֵמָה וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל-הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל-הָאָרֶץ:  
 ‘Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, after  
 our likeness, **so they may rule** over the fish of the sea and  
 the birds of the air, over the cattle, and over all the earth, and  
 over all the creatures that move on the earth.”’ (Gen. 1.26)
- (2) וְאֵל שַׁדַּי יְבָרֶךְ אֶתְךָ וַיַּבְרֶךְ יְיָ וַיִּבְרָךְ וְהָיִיתָ לְקָהָל עַמִּים:  
 ‘God Almighty bless you **and make you fruitful and mul-  
 tiply you**, that you may become a company of peoples.’  
 (Gen. 28.3)

By contrast, in order to express more generic futurity and/or the speaker-oriented modality of what convention says should or must happen, rather than *we-yiqtol*, *weqatal* is the norm, e.g.,

- (3) וְרָאוּ כָּל-עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ כִּי שֵׁם יְהוָה נִקְרָא עָלֶיךָ וַיִּרְאוּ מִמֶּךָ:  
 ‘And all the peoples of the earth shall see that you are called  
 by the name of the LORD, **and they shall be afraid** of you.’  
 (Deut. 28.10)

Similarly, the *weqatal* וְהָיִיתָ in example (2), though perhaps contextually interpretable as purposive (as in the gloss), is formally unspecified for anything more than just futurity, meaning that it can just as well be taken as ‘and you will become’.

In most forms of Second Temple Hebrew, the CBH TAM system, with its pragmatically distinct pairs of conversive and non-conversive perfective past forms (*wayyiqtol* and *qatal*) and habitual/future forms (*weqatal* and *yiqtol*), persists.<sup>2</sup> In all forms

<sup>2</sup> See Rabin (1958, 155; 1972, 371–73; 1976, 1015–16 fn. 2) on the rare attestation of conversive forms in Talmudic narrative.

of post-exilic Hebrew, however, the system witnesses at least some degree of erosion and, in certain cases, has been nearly or even totally eclipsed. For purposes of the present discussion, a crucial development is the use of the so-called non-conversive forms preceded by the simple conjunction  $\text{-ו}$  with the semantic values they have without the preceding conjunction, i.e., *we-qatal* for perfective past (just like *qatal*) and *we-yiqtol* for future (just like *yiqtol*).

## 1.0. Second Temple Evidence

### 1.1. Late Biblical Hebrew

The LBH verbal system, in general, and the use of *yiqtol*, more specifically, largely adhere to CBH norms (Cohen 2013, 151–92). Even so, a significant departure from CBH convention is the use of *we-yiqtol* for temporally ‘sequential’ eventualities (Cohen 2013, 151, 171–73). Consider example (4):

- (4) וְאִם־אֶשְׁלַח דְבַר בְּעַמִּי: וְיִכְנְעוּ עַמִּי אֲשֶׁר נִקְרָא־שְׁמִי עֲלֵיהֶם וַיִּתְפַּלְלוּ  
 וַיִּבְקְשׂוּ פָנַי וַיֵּשְׁבוּ מִדַּרְכֵיהֶם הָרָעִים וְאֲנִי אֶשְׁמַע מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶסְלַח  
 לְחַטָּאתָם וְאֶרְפָּא אֶת־אֲרָצָם:

‘...and if I send pestilence against my people,<sup>14</sup> **and** my people who are called by my name **humble themselves, and pray and seek** my face **and turn** from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven **and will forgive** their sin **and heal** their land.’ (2 Chron. 7.13b–14)

The passage presents a complex conditional clause that consists of a compound protasis and a compound apodosis. In both halves of the clause *we-yiqtol* constructions comprise all but the first

verb. In CBH, these would almost certainly have been *weqatal* forms. A classic diachronic parallel may be seen in example (5):

- (5) אִם-יְהִי־אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי וְשָׁמְרֵנִי בְּדַרְךָ הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ וְנָתַן-לִי לֶחֶם...  
 לֶאֱכֹל וּבְגָד לְלַבֵּשׁ: <sup>21</sup> וְשָׁבֹתִי בְּשָׁלוֹם אֶל-בַּיִת אָבִי וְהָיָה יְהוָה לִי לֵאלֹהִים:  
<sup>22</sup> וְהָאֶבֶן הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר-שָׁמַתִּי מִצְבָּה יְהִי־הִיא בַּיִת אֱלֹהִים וְכָל אֲשֶׁר תִּתֶּן-לִי עֲשֹׂר  
 אֲעֲשֶׂרְנּוּ לָךְ:

‘...If God is with me **and keeps me** in this way that I go, **and gives me** bread to eat and clothing to wear, **and I return** to my father’s house in peace, **then** the LORD **will be** my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, will be God’s house. And of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you.’” (Gen. 28.20b–22)

Here, all conditions save the initial one after אִם ‘if’ are *weqatal*, as is the first verb of the apodosis, וְהָיָה ‘then (the LORD) shall be’. These leaves just three non-*weqatal* verbs, which form is precluded due to preverbal elements preventing clause-initial position.

Such sequential uses of *we-yiqtol*, while constituting a noticeable departure from CBH norms, are relatively rare throughout most of the LBH corpus. Indeed, to the series of six such forms in 2 Chron. 7.14 in example (4) above, Cohen (2013, 172, fn. 42) adds cases in Est. 1.19; Neh. 6.13; 8.15; Dan. 12.4, 10; 2 Chron. 2.15; 14.6.<sup>3</sup>

Significantly, in his discussion of the LBH verbal system, Cohen (2013, 15) expressly omits Qohelet. While this is under-

<sup>3</sup> Cohen (2013, 172 fn. 42) also lists *we-yiqtol* cases in Dan. 1.12–13; 1 Chron. 13.2; 2 Chron. 12.8, but these are better seen as having classical purposive semantics.

standable insofar as Qohelet's verbal system differs markedly from that of the core LBH works—Esther, Daniel, Ezra–Nehemiah, and Chronicles—nevertheless, the language of Qohelet is widely regarded as reflecting a late chronolect (Delitzsch 1877, 190–99; Driver 1898, 474–75; Hurvitz 1990; 2007; Schoors 1992–2004; Seow 1996). Further, when it comes to the matter of non-conversive *we-qatal* and *we-yiqtol* forms, Qohelet appears to be farther along the developmental continuum than any other biblical book. In Qohelet, perfective past *we-qatal* routinely comes where one expects *wayyiqtol* in CBH,<sup>4</sup> whereas future/habitual *we-yiqtol* is nearly as common as future/habitual *weqatal*.<sup>5</sup>

## 1.2. Dead Sea Scrolls Hebrew

### 1.2.1. The Biblical Dead Sea Scrolls

As should be expected, classical usage of *we-yiqtol* is the norm in the BDSS. Even so, in some Qumran renditions of biblical texts a drift from future/imperfective *weqatal* to future/imperfective *we-*

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<sup>4</sup> There are only three cases of *wayyiqtol* in the book—1.17; 4.1, 7—against 31 cases of perfective past *we-qatal*: 1.13, 16; 2.5, 9, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 15, 17, 18, 20; 3.22; 4.1, 4, 7; 5.13, 13, 18; 8.10, 15, 17; 9.14, 14, 14, 15, 15, 16; 12.9 (?), 9 (?).

<sup>5</sup> Schoors (1992–2004, I:86–89) provides a corrective for extreme views, listing 15 cases of classical *weqatal* in the book, to which Qoh. 1.5, 5; 8.10; and 10.3 should be added. Future/habitual *we-yiqtol* comes around 13 times: 1.18; 2.19; 6.12; 7.7; 8.10; 12.4, 4, 5, 5, 5, 6, 6, 7. The occurrences in 11.8–9 are passably classical jussives. The unique genre of Qohelet may also have contributed to its rare use of conversive verbal forms.

*yiqṭol* is evident (Muraoka 2000, 210–11; Qimron 2018, 369, fn. 2). Kutscher (1974, 357–58) lists many examples from 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, e.g., (6):

- (6) כִּי־אָמַר יְהוָה לְסָרִיסִים אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמְרוּ אֶת־שַׁבְּתוֹתַי וַיִּבְחָרוּ...  
 כִּי־כֹה | אָמַר יְהוָה לְסָרִיסִים אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמְרוּ אֶת־שַׁבְּתוֹתַי וַיִּבְחָרוּ...  
 ‘Thus says the LORD to the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths  
**and choose...**’ (1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 46.14–15 || MT Isa. 56.4)

The Great Isaiah Scroll is renowned among DSS biblical material for its frequent departures from classical norms, but other examples of DSS biblical material also present cases of *we-yiqṭol* parallel to *weqatal* in the MT:

- וְיִהְיוּ ‘and they will be’ (4Q7 f2.3) || וְהָיוּ (MT Gen. 1.14)  
 וַיִּקְמוּ ‘and there will arise’ (4Q9 f3–4.2) || וְיָקָמוּ (MT Gen. 41.30)  
 וְיִהְיֶה ‘and it will be’ (XHev/Se5 f1.5) || וְהָיָה (MT Exod. 13.14)  
 וְאֶקְבְּצֵם ‘and I will gather them’ (4Q72 f44–50.7) || וְאֶקְבְּצֵם (MT Jer. 31.8)  
 וְיִרְעָשׁוּ ‘and (the heavens and the earth) will shake’ (4Q78 f18–20.9) || וְיִרְעָשׁוּ (MT Joel 4.16)  
 וְיִהְיוּ ‘and they will be’ (4Q76 4.4) || וְהָיוּ (MT Mal. 3.17)  
 וְיִחַנְנֵנִי ‘and he will have mercy on me’ (4Q98a f2ii.2) || וְיִחַנְנֵנִי (MT Ps. 30.11)<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> It is, of course, possible that one or more of these cases reflect an interpretive rather than a linguistic difference, i.e., purposive/result semantics instead of more broadly future force.



### 1.2.2. The Non-biblical Dead Sea Scrolls

Like the BDSS, the NBDSS by and large demonstrate adherence to the classical norms of the so-called conversive *wayyiqtol* and *weqatal*. Yet, it is widely acknowledged that the NBDSS deviate from classical norms much more frequently than the BDSS. This is very clear in the case of use of *we-yiqtol* where CBH would opt for *weqatal* (Smith 1991, 59; Muraoka 2000, 210–11; Qimron 2018, 369). An example of Rewritten Bible (or Reworked Scripture), The Temple Scroll (11QT<sup>a</sup> = 11Q19), with up to 60 cases showcases this usage, both where it cites biblical passages and where it presents independent material (Hornkohl 2021b, 147–49, esp. fn. 53; a lower figure is reported by Smith 1991, 59). From Temple Scroll biblical material, consider:

(7) **וַיִּכְבֵּס** בַּגְדָיו וְרָחַץ [בַּמַּיִם]

...**וַיִּכְבֵּס** בַּגְדָיו וְרָחַץ בַּמַּיִם

‘**And he will wash** his clothes and bathe in water’ (11QT<sup>a</sup>

51.3 || MT Num. 19.19b)

In (7), against the series of two *weqatal* forms in MT Num. 19.19b, 11QT<sup>a</sup> has an apparently synonymous combination of *we-yiqtol* and *weqatal* forms. Further examples from Rewritten Bible texts include:

וַיְדַבֵּר ‘and he will speak’ (4Q175 1.6) || וְדַבֵּר (MT Deut. 18.18)

וַיִּסְקְלוּנִי ‘and they will stone me (4Q365 7i.3) || וַיִּסְקְלוּנִי (MT Exod. 17.4)

וַיְדַבֵּר ‘and he will speak’ (11QT 6.15) || וְדַבֵּר (MT Deut. 20.2)

וימת 'and (the man) will die (11QT 56.11) || ומת (MT Deut. 17.12)

Such material also furnishes cases without biblical parallels, including:

...וייקח הפר השני אשר לעם ויכפר בו [ ] ... ויתן מדמו באצבעו על קרנות ה[מזבח]...

**“Then he will take** the second bull, the one for the people, **and he will make atonement** with it [ ]... **and he will put** some of its blood with his finger on the horns of the altar’ (11QT<sup>a</sup> 16.14–16)

ועשיתה על פי התורה אשר יגידו לכה ועל פי הדבר אשר יואמרו לכה מספר התורה ויגידו לכה באמת

‘and you must act according to the law that they proclaim to you and according to the word that they say to you from the book of the Law **and they shall tell** to you in truth’ (11QT<sup>a</sup> 56.3–4; cf. MT Deut. 17.9)

ואלוהים אָמר לא ידור רוחי באדם לעולם ויחתכו ימיהם מאה ועשרים שנה

‘..and God said, “My spirit shall not dwell with man forever, and their days **shall be determined** to be one hundred and twenty years...”’ (4Q252 1.1; cf. Gen. 6.3)

### 1.3. Samaritan Hebrew

Like its Tiberian counterpart, the Samaritan tradition combines a relatively early (primarily consonantal) written component with a comparatively later pronunciation component (that includes consonants and vowels). In general, the Tiberian and Samaritan traditions employ *weqatal* and *we-yiqtol* similarly. Divergences

are often explicable as interpretive differences, where one tradition or the other has a more nuanced purposive/result *we-yiqtol* in place of a less semantically specialised *weqatal* form or vice versa. Consider, by way of example:

- (8) ייעש (wyās) פרעה ויפקד (wyafqəd) פקדים על הארץ ויחמש  
 SP את ארץ מצרים בשבע שני השבע: (wyāmāš)  
 MT יַעֲשֶׂה פַרְעֹה וַיִּפְקֹד פְּקֻדִים עַל-הָאָרֶץ וַיַּחְמֵשׁ אֶת-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּשֶׁבַע שָׁנֵי  
 הַשָּׁבַע:

‘Let Pharaoh **do** [this] **and appoint** overseers over the land **and take one-fifth** of the land of Egypt during the seven plentiful years.’ (Gen. 41.34)

In (8), the MT, Joseph’s advice to Pharaoh is conveyed in a varied series of verb forms, consisting of a morphologically long *yiqtol*, a morphologically short *we-yiqtol*, and a *weqatal*, all apparently with 3rd-person directive force. The SP, conversely, uses a series of *we-yiqtol* forms (some morphologically short). If SH ייחמש *wyāmāš* for MT ויחמש ‘and let him take one-fifth of’ is secondary, it seems to have less to do with post-classical *we-yiqtol*’s eclipsing of *weqatal* than with the perception that classical *we-yiqtol* better suited the context than *weqatal*.

There is, however, one relevant systematic change. Where the MT has a *weqatal* form of a I-y *qal* verb the SP written tradition (like its Tiberian counterpart) is frequently ambiguous, but the SP reading tradition consistently records *we-yiqtol*. Though some of the following could conceivably be attributed to interpretive differences, their sheer number shows the broad nature of the shift.

וידעו *wyiddā'u* ‘and (Egypt) will know’ || וַיִּדְעוּ (MT Exod. 7.5; see also Exod. 14.4, 18; 29.46; Num. 14.31)

ויצא *wyiṣṣā* ‘and (the people) will go out’ || וַיֵּצֵא (MT Exod. 16.4; see also Exod. 17.6; 21.2; 34.34; Lev. 14.3, 38; 16.18, 24; 25.28, 33, 41, 54; Num. 34.4, 9; Deut. 21.2; 23.11)

ויצא *wyiṣṣā* ‘and (water) will come out’ || וַיֵּצֵא (MT Exod. 17.6)

וישב *wyiššāb* ‘and he will dwell’ || וַיֵּשֶׁב (MT Lev. 14.8; Num. 32.17; 35.25)

ויירש *wyirāš* ‘and he will possess’ || וַיִּרְשֶׁ (MT Num. 27.11; see also Deut. 3.20;

ויזיפו *wyūsīfu* ‘and (the officers) will continue’ || וַיִּזְכְּפוּ (MT Deut. 20.8)

וייראו *wyirā'u* ‘and they should fear’ || וַיִּירָאוּ (MT Deut. 28.10; 31.12)<sup>7</sup>

Another indication that the Samaritan I-y *qal weqatal* to *we-yiqtol* shift is part of a broad linguistic change is the corresponding Samaritan shift of I-y *qal wayyiqtol* (Samaritan *w-yiqtol*) to *we-qatal*, e.g., ויצר *wyāšār* ‘and (the LORD) formed’ || וַיִּצֶר (MT Gen. 2.7) (Ben-Hayyim 2000, 173, §2.9.8), a shift that even affected

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<sup>7</sup> Also possibly relevant is the case of וילדו *wyēlēdu* || וַיִּלְדוּ (MT Gen. 31.8, 8; see also Exod. 1.19; Deut. 21.15); but see Ben-Hayyim (2000, 139, §2.4.3) on the ambiguity of the form. Perhaps also in the case of ויסף *wyāšaf* ‘and he will add’ || וַיִּסֹּף (MT Lev. 22.14; see also Lev. 27.13, 15, 19, 27; Num. 32.15); see Ben-Hayyim (2000, 139, §2.4.2; above, ch. 11, §§1.3; 2.4). The shift does not obtain in the case of וירד *wyārād* ‘and (the hail) will fall’ || וַיִּרֵד (MT Exod. 9.19; see also Exod. 11.8; Num. 16.30; 34.11, 11, 12); ויצק *wyāšāq* ‘and he will pour’ || וַיִּצֶק (MT Lev. 2.1; see also Lev. 14.15).

3FS forms, e.g., ותלך ותשב *wtālāk wtāšāb* ‘and she went and sat’ || ותלך ותשב (Gen. 21.16), which have developed a secondary *a-a* realisation apparently inherited from the related *qatal* form (Khan 2021, 331; cf. Ben-Ḥayyim 2000, 173, §2.9.8). Together, both of these departures from classical norms that focus on I-y *qal* verbs—in comparison not just to Tiberian Hebrew, but to most Samaritan verb classes, too—exhibit the penetration of later features into the reading tradition where the written tradition was amenable to the shift.

#### 1.4. Ben Sira

Notwithstanding the book’s relatively late provenance, the language of BS—so far as it can be assessed given the extant textual sources—is remarkably classical. Post-classical roots and lexemes abound (Dihi 2004), but the grammar, while not devoid of post-classicisms, is an impressive imitation of CBH. The poetic nature of the material doubtless contributes to its classical mien.

Indeed, the poetic nature of BS makes it difficult to detect diagnostically post-classical instances of *we-yiqtol*. In an exhaustive discussion, van Peursen (2004, 166–79) surveys *we-yiqtol* forms throughout BS’s multiple witnesses and finds CBH parallels for nearly all of them. Arguable exceptions, perhaps indicating the adoption of post-classical conventions, occur in conditional clauses:

(9) אם יסור מאחרי אשליכנו ואסגירנו לשדדים:

‘If he goes astray after this, I will cast him away **and hand him over** to robbers.’ (SirA 1v.8 = Sir. 4.19b)

- (10) אם טוב תדיע למי תטיב וידי תקוה לטובתך:   
 ‘If you do good, know to whom you are doing it, **and there will be hope** for the good that you do.’ (SirA 4v.28–29 = Sir. 12.1)
- (11) וגם אם ישמע לך ויהלך בנחת: תן לבך להתירא ממנו   
 ‘And even if he shows regard for you **and walks** peacefully, commit your heart to being in fear of him.’ (SirA 5r.9 = Sir. 12.11)
- (12) אם שלך ייטיב דבריו עמך וירששך ולא יכאב לו   
 ‘If you have any possessions, he will speak pleasant words to you, **and he will make you poor** and it will not grieve him (SirA 5r.27–28 = Sir. 13.5)

According to CBH syntactic norms, in place of the above *we-yiqtol* usages, one would expect *weqatal* forms, whether encoding an ancillary condition in a compound protasis or beginning a conditional apodosis (bare, clause-initial *yiqtol* would also be possible for the latter).

### 1.5. Rabbinic Hebrew

Entirely lacking *weqatal* (and *wayyiqtol*) except in biblical citation, RH has regular recourse to *we-yiqtol* (in addition to other alternatives) where BH has *weqatal* (Bendavid 1967–1971, II:559–60). Consider the following contrastive pairs of BH and (Tannaitic and Amoraic) RH examples:

- (13a) ...ולא יישאו עון ומרתו...   
 ‘...lest they bear guilt **and die...**’ (Exod. 28.43)
- (13b) אבל אנו לא נחטא ונמות   
 ‘but we will not sin **and die...**’ (Sifre Bemidbar 10.33)

(14a) עֲלֵה נַעֲלֵה וַיִּרְשְׁנוּ אֹתָהּ

‘Let us go up at once **and occupy** it’ (Num. 13.30)

(14b) וְנִלְךְ וְנִירַשׁ אֶת אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל

‘...but we will go and inherit the land of Israel.’ (Sifre Bemidbar 10.33)

(15a) וַיֹּאמֶר פָּנֵי יְלִכּוּ וְהִנְחֵתִי לָךְ:

‘And he said, “My presence will go with you, **and I will give you rest.**”’ (Exod. 33.14)

(15b) הַמַּתֵּן לִי עַד שִׁיעֲבֵרוּ פָנִים שֶׁל זַעַם וְאֲנִי־חַ לָךְ

‘Wait for me until the face of anger passes **and I will give you rest.**’ (b. Berakhot 7.1)

(16a) וְנָאֵת | עֲשׂוּ לָהֶם וְחַיּוּ וְלֹא יָמָתוּ...

‘but deal thus with them **and they will live/so that they may live** and not die...’ (Num. 4.19)

(16b) בְּנֵי בִקֵּשׁ עֲלֵיו רַחֲמִים וַיַּחֲיֶה

‘my son, request mercy form him **and he will live/so that he may live**’ (b. Berakhot 34.2)

## 2.0. The Tiberian Reading Tradition of Classical Biblical Hebrew Texts

We now turn to the Tiberian reading tradition of CBH material, where a limited degree of the *weqatal* to *we-yiqtol* shift has been detected (Joosten 2017, 30–33). At issue here are a relatively small number of I-y *qal* verbal forms where *weqatal* morphology has arguably been secondarily updated with *we-yiqtol* vocalisation. All cases involve *we-yiqtol* forms of the verb יָרָא ‘fear’, most instances the repeated phraseology יִשְׁמְעוּ וַיִּרְאוּ ‘they will hear and

fear’, where it is argued that the original *weqatal* reading was along the lines of *יִשְׁמְעוּ וַיִּרְאוּ*.

(17) ... *יִשְׁמְעוּ וַיִּרְאוּ*; cf. 2Q11 f1.2 *וְכָל-הָעָם יִשְׁמְעוּ וַיִּרְאוּ*; SP *וַיִּירָאוּ wyīrā’u*  
 ‘And all the people will hear **and will fear...**’ (Deut. 17.13)

(18) ... *יִשְׁמְעוּ וַיִּרְאוּ*; cf. SP *וַיִּירָאוּ wyīrā’u*  
 ‘And the rest will hear **and will fear...**’ (Deut. 19.20)

(19) ... *וְכָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁמְעוּ וַיִּרְאוּ*; cf. SP *וַיִּירָאוּ wyīrā’u*  
 ‘And all Israel will hear **and will fear...**’ (Deut. 21.21)

There is at least a modicum of subjectivity in this assessment. Could the meaning here not be something like ‘they will hear so that they fear’, rather than ‘they will hear and fear’? True, *we-yiqtol* with final semantics is especially common after volitional forms—short/clause initial jussive *yiqtol*, imperative, cohortative—and the X-*yiqtol* order in the cases cited make it unlikely that the *יִשְׁמְעוּ* forms that precede *וַיִּרְאוּ* are jussive. Even so, final *we-yiqtol* sometimes follows non-volitional forms/clauses, e.g.,

#### Interrogative with agent-oriented *yiqtol*

(20) *וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו מִה-נַעֲשֶׂה לָּךְ וַיִּשְׁתַּקֵּם הָיָם מִעֲלֵינוּ* ...  
 ‘And they said to him: “What **shall we do** to you, **that** the sea **may quiet down** for us?” ...’ (Jon. 1.11)

#### Conditional future *yiqtol*

(21) *וְהָאָרֶץ תִּעָזֹב מֵהֶם וְתָרַץ אֶת-שַׁבְּתֹתֶיהָ בְּהִשְׁמָהּ מֵהֶם* ...  
 ‘But the land **shall be abandoned** by them **and enjoy** its Sabbaths while it lies desolate without them...’ (Lev. 26.43)



Simple past *qatal*

- (22) קראתי למאהבלי המה רמוני בהני וזקני בעיר גועו כי-בקשו אכל למו וישבו את-נפשם: ס

‘I called to my lovers, but they deceived me; my priests and elders perished in the city, for **they sought** food to **revive** their strength.’ (Lam. 1.19)

Past habitual *yiqtol*

- (23) אחר הדבר הזה לא-שב ירבעם מדרךו הרעה וישב ויעש מקצות העם בהני במות החפץ מלא את-ידו ויהי בהני במות:

‘After this thing Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but made priests for the high places again from among all the people. Any who wished, **he would ordain that they be** priests of the high places.’ (1 Kgs 13.33)

## Nominal clause

- (24) לא איש אל ויכזב ובן-אדם ויתגחם ...

‘God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind....’ (Num. 23.19)

One might also compare to Deut. 31.12–13, where the *yiqtol-weqatal* form of v. 12 (22) is paralleled in v. 13 (23) by a *weqatal*-infinitive construct sequence.

- (25) וייראו SP...; למען ישמעו ולמען ילמדו ויראו את-יהוה אלהיכם ...  
*wyirā'u*

‘...that they may hear **and that they may learn to fear** the LORD your God...’ (Deut. 31.12)

(26) ...ישמעו וְלִמְדוּ לִירְאָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם...

‘(And their children who have not heard) will hear **and will learn to fear** the LORD your God...’ (Deut. 31.13)

In this pair of verses, explicit final forms—וְלִמְעַן וְלִמְדוּ in v. 12 and לִירְאָה in v. 13—are paralleled by *weqatal* forms—וְלִמְדוּ in v. 13 and וְיִרְאוּ in v. 12 (while וְיִרְאוּ is orthographically ambiguous, וְלִמְדוּ is an unequivocal *weqatal*). The point is that even in cases where a finite form can be interpreted as having final semantics, MT Deuteronomy is content with a *weqatal* (though, as we shall see, the Samaritan tradition has וייראו *wyirā'u* here).

Something in the way of circumstantial evidence may be gleaned from the ancient Hebrew and foreign language textual witnesses—though, given the semantic range of *weqatal* and allowing for orthographic ambiguity, most of their renderings cannot be considered probative regarding the identity of the form translated. The Aramaic and Syriac *yiqtol* forms are opaque. The Vulgate reads one future and two subjunctives. The relevant BDSS form in 2Q11 f1.2 (=MT Deut. 17.13), written וייראו, is equivocal. By contrast, the Samaritan forms, which are spelled with *mater yod*, are consistently and transparently *yiqtol* according to both the written and reading components of the tradition, i.e., וייראו *wyirā'u*—in line with the Tiberian reading tradition. Yet this is also the case at Deut. 31.12, example (22), against the Tiberian tradition.

The foregoing facts are subject to various interpretations. Arguably, one of the more compelling is that a form intended to be read as *weqatal* וְיִרְאוּ was secondarily reinterpreted in the Tiberian vocalisation tradition as *we-yiqtol* וְיִרְאוּ in line with trends

seen to varying degrees in Second Temple Hebrew sources. This is not surprising, as various scholars have highlighted features within the Tiberian pronunciation tradition that indicate that, while preserving Iron Age features and not immune to Byzantine and medieval developments, it substantially crystallised in the Second Temple Period.

### **3.0. The Tiberian Classical Biblical Hebrew Written Tradition**

The obvious implication of all this is that, when it comes to internal Tiberian written-reading deviations such as these, the Tiberian reading tradition should be regarded as temporally removed from the pronunciation tradition implied by the consonantal text. This is borne out in numerous pieces of evidence, as seen throughout this monograph. Yet, as has also often been emphasised, it is not the whole story. Frequently, the Tiberian consonantal tradition itself bears witness to the very secondary features adopted that have become characteristic of the reading tradition. Consider an example relevant to the issue under examination here:

(27) וְאֶת־הָעָם צֹו לֵאמֹר אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים בְּגִבּוֹל אֶחֱיֵיכֶם בְּנֵי־עֵשָׂו הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּשֵׁעִיר

MT

וַיִּירָאוּ מִכֶּם וְנִשְׁמַרְתֶּם מְאֹד:

DSS ואת] העם צו לאמר אתם עברים בגבול אחיכם בני עשו הישב]ים בשעיר

ויראו מ[כ]ם ונשמרתם מאד

SP ואת העם צוי לאמר אתם עברים בגבול אחיכם בני עשו היושבים בשעיר

וַיִּירָאוּ (wyrā'u) מכם ונשמרתם מאד:

‘And command the people, “You are about to pass through the territory of your brothers, the people of Esau, who live in Seir; **and they will be afraid** of you. So be very careful.’

(Deut. 2.4 || 4Q35 f56.9 || SP)

Here the orthographically unambiguous Tiberian *we-yiqtol* form וַיִּירָאוּ is arguably less felicitous than *weqatal* וַיִּירָאוּ, since the meaning is not purposive ‘you are crossing into their territory... so that they fear you’, but one of mere succession, one event leading to the next. Crucially, though, given the *mater yod*, the written and reading components of the Tiberian tradition are in harmony here; similar harmony characterises the written and reading components of the SP at this point. For purposes of contrast, one may compare the BDSS text 4Q35 f56.9, which has the more ambiguous spelling ויראו, perhaps (but not certainly) reflecting a *weqatal* form. If the MT form here is secondary, it shows that the *yiqtol* morphology has penetrated into not only that layer of the reading tradition reflected in the medieval vocalisation signs, but also into that reflected by the *matres lectionis*, which were presumably added earlier on, probably in the Second Temple Period.

Similarly, and of more immediate relevance, in a fourth occurrence of the וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ וַיִּירָאוּ formula, in Deut. 13.12, the text reads:

(28) ... וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁמְעוּ וְיִרְאוּ...

‘And all Israel will hear **and will fear...**’ (Deut. 13.12)

This case differs from the rest in that the *we-yiqtol* form ends with paragogic *nun*. While *qatal* forms with paragogic *nun* are not unknown in the MT (there are three of them: Deut. 8.3, 16; Isa. 26.16), they are more than one-hundred times less frequent than *yiqtol* forms with the same suffix. In this case, again, there is harmony between the Tiberian written and reading traditions. Either the *we-yiqtol* form here with paragogic *nun* is original or the historical depth of the secondary *we-yiqtol* analysis in the Tiberian tradition extends beyond the levels of vocalism reflected in *niqqud* and *matres* to consonantal realisation.

#### 4.0. Conclusion

This leads us back to the three other cases of וְיִשְׁמְעוּ וְיִרְאוּ. If the apparently problematic *we-yiqtol* readings of וְיִרְאוּ and וְיִרְאוּ are rooted in the written tradition, then perhaps cases in which *we-yiqtol* וְיִרְאוּ has been seen as a secondary vocalisation are *not* deviations from the ostensible pronunciation underlying the written tradition, but reliably conserve it. There are at least three ways to interpret the evidence:

1. *We-yiqtol* in place of *weqatal* is strictly late, in which case all supposed forms—whether in the written or reading tradition—must be explained as late. This could mean anything from the late composition of the entire surrounding text, through the insertion of a late gloss, to a corruption, to the secondary

updating of the consonantal text by means of addition of a *mater* or paragogic *nun*. This option seems extreme.

2. On the other extreme, on the basis of the consonantal evidence of *we-yiqṭol* for *weqaṭal*, one might adopt the view that *all* cases of suspected interchange are acceptable CBH, so that no secondary process in line with late Hebrew trends need be entertained, except for the notion that such early instances are authentic forerunners in the vein of what would later become more established convention.

3. There is also a preferable middle path between these extremes. This involves allowing for *both* the early agreement of the Tiberian written and reading traditions on characteristically late features *and* the deviation of the reading component from the typologically earlier profile of its written counterpart in line with Second Temple developments. Whether this is analysed as the early original use of a characteristically late feature secondarily extended within the reading tradition or as a process of secondary development within the written tradition, the implication is the same: less remoteness between the written and reading components, which, even in the case of apparent secondary developments, should be seen as largely overlapping on the historical continuum.

Similarly, in the case of *we-yiqṭol* for *weqaṭal*, it is possible that a certain number of I-y *qal* forms vocalised as *we-yiqṭol* began as *weqaṭal* forms, so that there is a degree of dissonance on this point between the written and reading components of the Tiberian tradition. But given the consonantal testimony regarding the feature, this dissonance should not be interpreted as a chasm be-

tween the two. Obviously, linguistic continuity typifies the relationship between the written and reading traditions when it comes to the vast majority of linguistic features. But even in dissonance there is continuity. The distinction between the written and reading components is one of degree, not essence, characterised by drift along a continuum within a continually recited tradition, rather than a clean break and restart within the tradition.

